

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
APPLICATION NO. 09/392,585
ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. Q55716

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-11, and 13 are all the claims now pending in the application. Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the requirement that the *plurality of* franking machines is independent of the management server. The claim amendments contain no new matter, and are supported by at least Fig. 1 of the originally-filed specification.

As now claimed, the invention relates to a process for monitoring the consumptions of a plurality of franking machines, some (20, 22, 24) of which are connected to a management server (50) only through a public communication network (40) and others (30, 32) of which are completely isolated from this network (as illustrated in figure 1 of the specification).

An independent supervision terminal (60) is connected to the public communication network in order to access to the consumptions (i.e. the invoicing index) of all the franking machines (connected to or isolated from the network). Concerning the network-connected franking machines, this invoicing index is the current invoicing index (these machines are independent of but in communication with the server which can read at its request the index of each connected machine). Concerning the isolated franking machine, this invoicing index is the last invoicing index communicated by the user to the server with the supervision terminal.

These features are not at all disclosed by the cited references, as will now be described.

The prior art rejections.

Le Carpentier in view of Kim.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 4-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Le Carpentier 4,752,950 in view of Kim.

Le Carpentier in view of Kim and what was allegedly well known.

The Examiner rejected claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Le Carpentier-Kim as applied to claims 1, 4, and 7-12 above, and further in view of what

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was allegedly well known to the ordinary artisan in the art at the time the invention was made (and is allegedly evidenced by Gerszberg et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,359,881).

Applicant's response to both prior art rejections.

Le Carpentier (US 4,752,950) relates to only connected franking machines, and Kim (US 5,224,046) refers to connected franking machines (figure 2) and isolated franking machines (specification column 6 lines 49 to 51). In this later Kim reference, system 10a (corresponding to the supervisor terminal of the invention according to the opinion of the examiner) is connected between the management server (30) and the postage meter (40).

Consequently, if a problem appears on this system 10a, the plurality of franking machines is not accessible because the server can only access to the franking machines through this system 10a.

On the contrary, in the invention as set forth in independent claim 1, the plurality of franking machines are all independent from the supervision terminal, and a problem on this supervision terminal does not affect the relation between the server and the connected franking machines.

Even taken for what they would have meant as a whole to an artisan of ordinary skill, the combined teachings of Le Carpentier, Kim, and what was allegedly well known would not have led such a person to have arrived at the subject matter now defined by independent claim 1. Further, untaught modifications would have been required. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 4 and 6-11 as being unpatentable over Le Carpentier in view of Kim, and the rejection of claims 2 and 3 over Le Carpentier and Kim, and further in view of what was allegedly well known.

New claim 13.

New claim 13 depends from independent claim 1, and includes requirements related to the updating of the last invoicing index of the isolated franking machines by introducing the current invoicing index in the supervision terminal. In view of these particular points, and in

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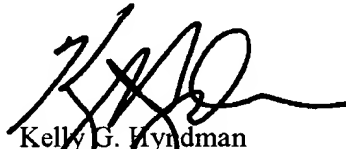
view of the dependency of new claim 13 from independent claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that new claim 13 patentably distinguishes over the prior art and respectfully requests of the Examiner its allowance.

Conclusion and request for telephone interview.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: February 28, 2003